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LABOR MARKET DIMENSIONS

A Monthly Report on the Dynamics of the Labor Market in Maryland

January & February 1988

Maryland

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MARYLAND

JOBLESS RATE TAKES A SEASONAL UPTURN

Maryland's unemployment rate reflected the seasonality of employment patterns, increasing by 1.0 percentage points over the month to reach its January level of 5.2 percent. This January's rate, although moderately above that of 4.8 percent recorded last year, represents a significant improvement over the long-term monthly average. From an historical perspective, the unemployment rate in January for the past seven years (1981-1987) has averaged 6.8 percent.

Since October, seasonal increases in the statewide labor force have lagged considerably behind the expansion of previous years. As a result, the labor force exodus which normally occurs in January was relatively moderate this year. Between December and January, the statewide labor pool contracted by an estimated 19,845 residents. This compares to a long-term monthly average labor force decline of 40,280 persons. This January's lower than average labor force withdrawal failed to absorb the full impact of seasonal employment declines, particularly in trade, education, and outdoor-related activities. This imbalance contributed, in large part, to the overall increase in both the volume and rate of unemployment in January.

	January 1988	December 1987	January 1987
Civilian Labor Force	2,403,194	2,423,039	2,365,674
Total Employment	2,279,362	2,320,585	2,251,483
Total Unemployment	123,832	102,454	114,191
Unemployment Rate	5.2	4.2	4.8
National Civilian Unemployment Rate	6.3	5.4	7.3

The upturn in Maryland's jobless estimate followed the national forecast which showed unemployment rising from 5.4 percent in December to 6.3 percent in January.